



MONTANA  
QUALITY EDUCATION  
COALITION

SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 4

DATE 3-19-07

BILL NO. HB 363

**TESTIMONY ON HB 363 – Rep. John Ward  
Senate Education and Cultural Resources Committee  
March 19, 2007**

Chairman Ryan and members of the committee, for the record, I am Pete Carparelli,  
Executive Director of the Montana Quality Education Coalition.

**I appear on behalf of the Montana Quality Education Coalition as a proponent of  
HB 363 sponsored by Representative Ward.**

Today, MQEC supports passage of HB 363 because it believes that this bill will be one very practical step forward to the goal adequate funding. On that alone, HB 363 is good policy. The fact that Representative Ward's bill builds on previous work by Rep. Villa, compliments HB417 by Rep. Hollenbaugh, and appears to have input from the Office of Public Instruction and the Governor's Office, makes it a wonderful example of bipartisan efforts to address a real need for many of the State's school districts. That fact makes it even better public policy.

HB 363 simplifies a veritable maze of rules that address an entire series of "If... then..." budget scenarios. Simpler laws that meet a need are eminently preferable over laws that are unnecessarily complex.

Finally, the changes to the method of adopting a general fund budget recognize and directly address the need for many districts to adjust their previous budget limits in order to access funding you provide to them. This method allows school districts to continue to provide valuable services to children while improving their services with the funds you have appropriated for such improvement.

**The language proposed by HB 363 provides an opportunity, with local voter involvement, to access the funding that you have meant to reach the kids.**

Chairman Ryan and members of the committee, I suggest to you that HB 363 is good public policy as it promotes the Legislature's intent to support quality public K-12 education, while it assists locally elected decisions makers in their obligation to do the same, and is one way forward to adequate funding statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. Thank you, Rep. Ward and all the others who have worked together to bring HB 363 to the Legislature.